

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### WNS in Yancey County and other developments

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

For biologists, the winter bat season has ended. Caves and mines have been explored. Bats have been counted and unfortunately for the Southern Appalachians, white-nose syndrome, the disease that is deadly to so many bats, was found in North Carolina.

While much remains to be learned about white-nose syndrome, there is evidence that people may inadvertently spread the fungus believed to cause the disease from cave-to-cave. The simplest step people can take to help bats is staying out of mines and wild caves. For biologists and others who must go into caves, the Fish & Wildlife Service has developed an intensive protocol for cleaning clothing and gear, and many commercial caves are taking steps to allow their visitors to clean clothing upon leaving the cave.

In 2009, fearing the fungus could be transferred from cave to cave by people, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a cave advisory asking people to refrain from entering wild caves in states where white-nose syndrome has been confirmed and all adjoining states. Further, most federal land management agencies, numerous states, and private landowners have closed caves in an attempt to slow the spread of the fungus.

The fungus believed to cause white-nose syndrome has been found on nine species of bats thus far in North America and eight of those species are found in North Carolina which is home to 17 types of bats.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.